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5064-01-2. The Rote Kapelle.
The CIA's History of
Soviet Intelligence &
Espionage Networks in
Western Europe 1936-45

THE ROTE KAPELLE:

The CIA's History of Soviet Intelligence and Espionage Networks in Western Europe, 1936-1945

The term "Rote Kapelle" ("Red Orchestra," "Red Band," "Red Choir," or "Red Chapel") was a cryptonym coined by German security officials to designate the Soviet intelligence and espionage networks which were discovered in Western Europe after the outbreak of the Russo-German war in 1941. The reports from agents were transmitted primarily by radio: the "music" on the air had its pianists (radio operators), a maestro in the field (the "Grand Chef"), and its conductor in Moscow (the Director). Established throughout Europe as early as 1935-36, the Rote Kapelle in its initial stage was composed of specially trained Red Army intelligence officers whose mission was to determine the extent of military aviation and heavy weapons development in Western countries. Therefore in 1941, when the need arose, the Soviets were able to turn against the Germans the most experienced and firmly entrenched network of foreign spies and local informants in Europe.

Taking advantage of anti-Nazi sentiment among certain German military and intelligence leaders, the Rote Kapelle, the present study concludes, "transmitted such a quantity of data that the sheer bulk of the traffic became a hazard in itself." In the sense that its agents had more high level German sources than any other network, the Rote Kapelle was the most successful intelligence operation of the war. Citing interviews, reports of interrogations, copies of messages, and its own investigation, the present study identifies many of these sources for the first time. We learn that the Rote Kapelle was given information by one of the highest officials of the Abwehr (at a time when the Abwehr, the primary

German intelligence unit, was tracking the members of the Rote Kapelle), and that the Rote Kapelle had informants at the top of both the OKW (German Wehrmacht High Command) and the OKH (German Army High Command). Whereas "Ultra," the British system of decoding German communications, was limited to the extent that it relied upon the German's use of communications, the Rote Kapelle could call on its sources to relay firsthand reports of policy decisions.

The Rote Kapelle is by far the most detailed study of Soviet wartime espionage and intelligence. Written by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, which made excellent use of its unparalleled files on this topic, *The Rote Kapelle* gives us an almost unbelievable amount of information: identities of major and minor agents, activities of agents before and after the war, the founding of the networks, their cover and security, their finances, their communications, their sources of intelligence, their orders and operations, their relations with Moscow, and the attempts of the Abwehr and the Gestapo to eliminate them. The agents and their operations were wide-spread (over 100 agents were killed, many more survived), they were of immeasurable importance, and they are at last being given their proper place in print.

The Rote Kapelle: The CIA's History of Soviet Intelligence and Espionage Networks in Western Europe, 1936-1945.

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